

Pre-Show Information

Young Vic presents

Nachtland



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Directed by **Patrick Marber**

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Introduction:

This document contains detailed information about the show in order to describe what you should expect when attending.

This includes information about the content warnings, plot, the space, lighting and sound, audience participation, and further access information.

All of the information in this document was correct at the time of publishing. More information will be available closer to the time of performance.

Please note that by discussing the content of the show, **the below information will contain key plot points and descriptions of what happens in the performance.**

If you would like to receive elements of this information but avoid these spoilers, please do not read the section at the end of this document entitled 'Show Synopsis'.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Box Office team:

E-mail: boxoffice@youngvic.org

Phone number: 020 7922 2922

Show Information:

Running Time: 1 hour 35 minutes with no interval

Content warnings:

- Themes of racism.
- Themes and instances of antisemitism.
- References to the Holocaust.
- References to the Israel-Palestine conflict and history.
- References to Nazi influence in Israel and Palestine.
- References to the death of a parent.
- Description of injury and moments where blood is onstage.
- Strong language, including explicit sexual language.
- Sexual content, including partial nudity, masturbation, and scenes involving incest.
- Nazi gestures including Nazi salutes.
- Brief allusions to nonconsent / rape.
- Sexism.

Production warnings

- Flashing and pulsing lights
- Water based haze
- Smoke from a stage pipe that contains no tobacco or nicotine
- Sudden loud music and sound effects

Please note these show warnings are subject to change until **Tuesday 27 February**, when the show will be finalised. For more information about when these moments occur in the show, please read the show synopsis starting page 6.

Show Warnings Timings:

Please note the timings below are all approximations.

There is mention of the loss of a parent and some antisemitic remarks including talks about Nazis and Hitler from the beginning of the play and throughout.

3 minutes 30 seconds – Graphic description of death.

6 minutes and 15 seconds – Loud music after Judith enters upstage through the arch after she finds the painting “behind the skis”.

9 minutes and 50 seconds – Fabians opens the back of the picture with secateurs and cuts his finger. There is a small amount of blood shown.

12 minutes 30 seconds – The family find out that the painting has “A. Hitler’s” signature at the bottom.

13 minutes 20 seconds – Antisemitic remarks.

17 minutes 20 seconds – Loud music during scene change that accompanies the entrance of the painting expert, Evamaria.

20 minutes 30 seconds – Jewish profiling.

23 minutes – Nazi salute.

26 minutes 40 seconds – The line “Vienna is crawling with them” is said.

33 minutes 45 seconds – The line “Only Nazis burn art” is said.

33 minutes 15 seconds – Graphic description of Fabian’s injury. This is accompanied by pulsing lights with the sounds of a heart pounding/throbbing. The pulsing changes to flickering and the thumping gets louder.

43 minutes 45 seconds – Israel and Palestine conflict conversation begins.

50 minutes 20 seconds – Flashing lights and sudden loud music. Kahl is shown dancing in a revealing pair of shorts. This scene lasts approximately a minute. He sprays an aerosol which is scented in the air.

53 minutes 30 seconds – Loud operatic singing plays whilst the ring is presented to Evamaria.

54 minutes 40 seconds – “Heil Hitler” is shouted repeatedly as Fabian reads the letter found in the skip.

58 minutes – Flickering lights as tetanus is taking over Fabian's body.

1 hour – Nazi salute and goose stepping in Fabian's movement as he leaves the stage. Loud music accompanies scene change that lasts 30 seconds.

1 hour 2 minutes – Philipp shouts at Judith very loudly.

1 hour 3 minutes – Live singing by Judith.

1 hour 15 minutes – Kahl briefly smokes a pipe which emits smoke. It is an e-vape with no nicotine or tobacco.

1 hour 27 minutes – Sudden change of lights to accompany the altercation between Philipp and Judith.

1 hour 29 minutes – Judith banging on the bathroom door gradually gets louder.

1 hour 35 minutes – Philipp places ring on Nicola finger. Partial nudity and mutual masturbation.

1 hour 40 minutes – All characters leave the stage. There are bright lights and loud sounds which stop abruptly.

The Auditorium

Nachtland

This show will take place in our main auditorium, which is the larger of our three performance spaces.

For this performance, the space will be in a 'thrust' arrangement, meaning there will be seats on three sides of the auditorium facing the stage. The maximum capacity is 442.

Access to the main auditorium is via the upstairs (rows J - K) and downstairs (rows A – G) via the main doors. Row T is in the tech gallery. Our ushers are on hand to help you, they wear red t-shirts and jumpers with our logo.

Please arrive at the Young Vic with your ticket ready on your phone or have it printed before you enter or you can collect from box office.

Facilities:

There are toilets located on the ground and first floor at the Young Vic, via The Cut Bar. We have gender-neutral and accessible/baby changing toilets. Sanitary bins are available in all.

Building Accessibility:

All indoor venues will also be accessible with lifts & ramps and toilet provided.

Assistance Dogs:

Assistance dogs are always welcome at the Young Vic, if you are planning a visit please let us know in advance which performance you will be attending by calling

our box office on **020 7922 2922** or e-mailing boxoffice@youngvic.org and we will be happy to look after your dog during the show.

Access for all:

For full information about our access measures, please visit our Access for all page, on our website here: www.youngvic.org/visit-us/access-for-all

Show Synopsis:

Please note this synopsis is subject to change until **Tuesday 27 February**, when the show will be finalised.

Blue – Flashing lights / haze

Green – Loud sounds / stage effects

Orange – smells

Purple – Potentially distressing themes / content

The play begins with adult siblings Nicola (**Dorothea Myer-Bennett**) and Philipp (**John Heffernan**) telling the audience their father recently passed away. They are cleaning out his old house and arguing while they do. Nicola is bitter that Philipp did not help her look after their father near the end of his life. Nicola's husband Fabian (**Gunnar Cauthery**) tries to break up the argument, and Nicola tells him that this is a family matter and none of his business. Nicola tells Philipp that their father spent his final moments calling for someone called Luise, a person neither sibling knows anything about. Fabian keeps trying to bring up a painting he has found in the attic but continues to be talked over by the siblings as they argue. Philipp takes a more sentimental view of their father's belongings, while Nicola takes a more pragmatic approach, insisting nothing is left of him in the flat where he died, which Philipp considers disrespectful.

Philipp's wife Judith (**Jenna Augen**) is introduced, also wishing to discuss the painting that has been found in the late father's attic. Nicola and Philipp quickly summarise the situation to the audience: their father died two weeks ago after a brief but serious illness, and they arrived to dissolve the flat, finding a painting. Fabian describes the painting, a simple watercolour of a church and countryside scene. Nicola argues they should throw it out, but Fabian likes the frame. **He sits down to try and take the painting out of the frame using pliers and cuts himself in the process. Blood is seen on his thumb and a few drops on the painting frame.** Philipp suggests Fabian get a tetanus shot, but Nicola dismisses this as unnecessary and returns to the previous conversation, suggesting the painting be

thrown out. Philipp disagrees, insisting it must have been important to their father for him to keep it for all those years. While brother and sister bicker, Judith addresses the audience, examining the painting. She finds a name on the margin that was covered by the frame and, upon taking it to the light, deciphers that it reads “A dot Hitler”.

Philipp is shocked. Nicola demands to see the painting, saying to Philipp “your wife sees Hitler everywhere”. Judith questions this, but Nicola denies saying anything. Upon examining the painting, Nicola declares it must be a forgery, prompting Judith to question why Philipp and Nicola’s father would have bought a painting supposedly painted by Hitler. Judith says they should simply throw away the painting, but Fabian objects, saying they should act as if it is real and sell it. Philipp interjects and says he doesn’t want to sell it as it reminds him of his father. Judith insists the painting should be thrown away, and Nicola tells her she doesn’t have a say in this, insisting that she and Philipp should discuss the matter privately. The four argue, and Fabian points out this conversation is irrelevant unless they know whether the painting is genuine.

A specialist Dr. Evamaria Günther (**Jane Horrocks**) is brought in to determine whether the painting is genuine. Dr. Günther suggests that the painting does reflect Hitler’s style and complements his attention to detail. Judith is angered by Evamaria’s apparent dispassionate respect for Hitler. Nicola tells Judith she is prejudiced, and Philipp reveals that Judith is Jewish. Philipp begins to speak about Judith’s Jewishness; how difficult it was for his Catholic parents to adjust, how their friends must work around her Kosher diet. etc. Judith repeatedly tries to interrupt him, but he speaks over her.

Conversation is steered back to the painting, and Evamaria points out the seal of a Samuel Morgenstern, a Jewish glazier who bought Hitler’s paintings. Philipp muses the painting suggests the possibility of an alternative world where Hitler became a successful painter instead of a murderous dictator. Judith is confused as to why Hitler would have worked with a Jewish man, and Evamaria explains that Hitler frequently visited him. **In a following conversation filled with antisemitic microaggressions, the other characters wonder about Hitler’s character in his early life and whether something in the behaviour of Morgenstern caused Hitler’s hatred of Jewish people. Judith angrily reminds them of the severity of**

Hitler's crimes, and Nicola accuses her of always bringing up the Holocaust, which angers Judith so much she leaves. Now feeling able to “speak openly”, Evamaria confirms that this painting is a genuine Hitler as proved by the Morgenstern frame. Nicola then delivers a monologue, explaining that she still doesn't like the painting but now sees it differently, with a kind of fascinated horror. She thinks about how this painting is connected to the history of her life.

We move to a conversation between Philipp and Judith. Philipp wants to sell the painting as it is very valuable, potentially suggesting donating the money to a charity to ease their consciences. However, Philipp is aware that to make the maximum amount of money off the painting, they need to be able to trace its story and history back to Hitler, which will require looking into where his father got this picture from. Judith in contrast argues they should burn the painting, or give it to a museum, as it would be wrong to profit off it.

The scene moves to Nicola and Fabian. Nicola is looking at potential houses she and Fabian could buy with the profits from selling the painting. When Fabian reminds her that the money is not guaranteed as they still need to find the paintings provenance, Nicola is short tempered with him. **Fabian then delivers a monologue to the audience about his injury, suggesting he is beginning to contract tetanus after cutting his hand on the painting. He feels he has in some way been infiltrated by the painting.**

[Stage effects]

This scene is accompanied by loud music and the repetitive sound of a heartbeat.

This scene will also be accompanied by flashing lights.

We return to a conversation between all the characters, and Nicola suggests the painting belonged to their grandmother Oma Grete, who was an opera singer and member of the Nazi party. Nicola reveals that one of her father's last requests was for their grandmother's possessions to be thrown out, explaining she suspected this was because they demonstrated their grandmother's active involvement in the Nazi party. Nicola promised her father not to talk about it, but when pressed by Fabian and Evamaria, she reveals her father told her their

grandmother had an affair with Hitler's secretary Martin Bormann. Philipp insists Nicola is making this up to drive up the painting's price. Judith is unpleasantly surprised as she didn't know Philipp and Nicola's family was so closely linked to the Nazi party. Upon realising that her own engagement ring given to her by Philipp used to belong to this Nazi grandmother, she takes it off.

Judith and Philipp then speak to the audience about their relationship. Judith wants them to live in the present, but Philipp seems to see their relationship as a representative act of reconciliation between Germans and Jewish people, which makes Judith uncomfortable. She tells Philipp sometimes she feels he only married her out of cultural guilt. Frustrated by what she sees as unfair bullying of her brother, Nicola then intervenes, suggesting Judith's implication in persecution of Palestinians as a Jewish woman. **This leads to a debate among the characters about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.** Nicola argues that "Jews, of all people" should have learned to treat Palestinians better, while Judith balks at the idea that the Holocaust "was a sort of educational project" and points out that criticism of Israel is often a thin veil for antisemitism. Judith brings up Arab leaders who associated with Nazis during the war and expresses her anger that she is expected to represent every Israeli or every Jewish person. The conversation turns back to the ring that Philipp gave Judith, arguing about what the initials on the ring stand for; Margarete and Bruno (Philipp and Nicola's grandfather and grandmother) or Martin Bormann. Judith tells Philipp she doesn't want a "Nazi ring".

We then meet Kahl the buyer (**Angus Wright**) dancing in his home. **Kahl is topless and wearing fetishist underwear with cutouts showing parts of his flesh on his thighs and buttocks. He dances with Evamaria and she hands him some body spray in preparation for the potential sale of the painting. He sprays this as he dances off stage.**

[Stage Effects]

A smell of body spray in the auditorium.

This scene is accompanied by loud music.

Flashing coloured lights are seen throughout this section.

Fabian comes in covered in plum jam, carrying the letters shouting “Heil Hitler”. He has been digging in the bin to retrieve Grandma Grete’s letters and has found evidence that she was a staunch nationalist such as multiple letters ending with Heil Hitler. Throughout the scene Fabian progressively starts to decline, his body beginning to twist and shake as if he is having a tetanus induced attack. He is grinning maniacally and speaking nonsensically, saying he’s worried there’s something wrong with him and asking someone to take him to a hospital. Nicola dismisses him angrily, saying she cannot leave now as a prospective buyer for the painting is about to arrive and she doesn’t trust Philipp and Judith to close the deal. Fabian continues rambling about hearing the noise of the planets waking the dead. Nicola then addresses the audience directly, saying she realised her mistake in hindsight of letting Fabian go alone to the hospital, suggesting that Fabian will die. **Nicola then waves Fabian away, and he performs a movement sequence showing his body succumbing to tetanus which ends with him turning into a parodied Nazi zombie and goose stepping offstage.**

[Stage effect]

This sequence is accompanied by loud music and the repetitive sound of a heartbeat.

The scene cuts to Philipp, who is get dressed in a suit ready for the buyer to arrive. Judith enters and begs Philipp for them to leave now, but he refuses. Philipp argues selling the painting would get rid of Hitler’s influence in their lives, but Judith insists the money they get from its sale will corrupt every part of their lives. Philipp loses his temper with Judith and shouts at her to “shut up”. Philipp says he had to go through with this, letting Judith know that she can leave if she feels uncomfortable. Philipp leaves, and Judith sings a haunting song acapella before she also exits.

Kahl arrives, and Evamaria, Philipp and Nicola stand ready to greet him. Evamaria explains the painting, bringing out letters from Martin Borman to his wife about Philipp and Nicola’s grandmother and Judith’s ring as evidence of the painting’s authenticity. **The content of the letters is potentially disturbing, containing suggestions that Martin Borman sexually assaulted their grandmother Grete.** Kahl refuses to share his name and carries an air of mystery. He says he is

planning to buy the painting for a client that must remain nameless. He is very excited and seems prepared to pay a large amount for the painting, when Judith enters and says that the painting is a forgery. The others try to quiet her, but Judith insists that even if the painting's origin is genuine, it is still fake as its existence is a mistake. Evamaria tells Kahl that Judith is Jewish, which Nicola says explains why she can't think about the painting like the rest of them as "normal people".

[Stage effect]

The smell of smoke from the buyer's pipe in the auditorium

Evamaria interjects, saying that the foundation of Germany as a modern nation in terms of its financial and industrial position is based on Hitler's influence. Judith then accuses the others of being Nazis. Evamaria insists that people must be allowed to express opinions even if you disagree with them, while Kahl argues for the separation of the artist from the art, referencing other well-known historical figures and artists who were antisemitic. Judith again tries to convince Kahl the painting is fake, drawing attention to the uncertainty in the letters. In response to his argument about the validity of separating the artist from the art, she insists that context is important, using the example of how when different people say "I love you" it means something different coming from each one. Kahl disagrees with Judith's assessment of him as a racist, saying he finds Judith "very attractive" as "a sensuous Jewish woman". He asks Judith to go to dinner with him and offers increasingly more money for the painting on the condition that she agree. Nicola is inclined to accept the proposal, and Philipp encourages Judith to consider it, to her outrage. Judith then says that she will go to dinner with Kahl and even sleep with him provided he destroys the painting after he buys it. Nicola insists that Judith needs to leave, and Philipp drags her from the room. Judith delivers a monologue about how Morgenstern went to Hitler for help in the 1930s but ended up dead along with so many other Jewish people. She exits, and Philip describes dragging Judith away and locking her in the bathroom.

[stage effect]

Audio of Judith trying to free herself from the locked bathroom.

Nicola and Philipp bargain with Kahl and end up selling the painting for 170 thousand Euros. Evamaria ensures her cut and then leaves. Please with the new addition to his collection, Kahl leaves too. Left along, Philipp gives Nicola Judith's ring, saying it was meant for her. Nicola thinks of her husband in the hospital with tetanus, and how he might not survive, telling Philipp that he was a terrible lover. **Philipp puts the ring on Nicola's hand, and the two begin to undress and engage in mutual masturbation on themselves. They lean in to kiss.** Kahl suddenly returns and interrupts them, realising that he hasn't been given the painting. Nicola and Philipp realise that Judith was last seen with it. They unlock the bathroom door, but Judith has disappeared. The three speculate what has happened and then find the painting sopping wet in a bathtub. The church in the painting has been replaced by a blue biro drawing of a child defecating. In the chaos of the subsequent argument, a new character Luise (also played by **Jane Horrocks**) suddenly appears. She explains she was having an affair with Philipp and Nicola's dead father. She expresses her commiseration and asks to collect the painting that he was storing for her. She makes her way upstairs past the other 3 characters, who are sheepishly concealing the painting behind their backs. Left alone again, Khal breaks off with the painting and runs offstage. The siblings are left staring at each other in shock. The music swells and the play ends.

[Stage effect]

The stage and auditorium illuminates with very bright lights.

If you would like any further clarification or have any questions, please do get in touch with our Box Office team.

Email: boxoffice@youngvic.org

Phone number: 020 7922 2922

See you soon!

Welcome Team